

Required elements for work-shop 6– 25/05 –26/05 2006 in Bologna

EDUCATION AND INFORMATION AS TOOL FOR RISK MITIGATION: THE OSSERVATORIO VESUVIANO INGV EXPERIENCE IN NEAPOLITAN AREA.

The natural risks assessment have the further step in researching how to mitigate these risks, give to education and outreach activities an important and peculiar role.

Volcanoes are one of the people favourite scientific issue, and the request of information about them directed to researches involved in volcano studies, are particularly frequent and pressing in active volcanic areas. Education and information programs play an important role among the natural risk mitigation measures. A long-term effort in educational programs is essential to convey simple, clear and complete information able to contribute to a better understanding of peculiar territory features and the related hazard and risk.

In Italy National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology (INGV) promotes natural risks education and outreach activities. In particular activities focused on volcanic risk are mainly carried out by INGV sections Osservatorio Vesuviano, in Neapolitan area, also in collaboration with Civil Defence Department. The Osservatorio Vesuviano, funded in 1841 as the first volcano observatory in the world, is a scientific institution interested in geophysics and volcanic researches mainly on Neapolitan volcanoes, and it also carries out actions aimed at spreading the scientific culture with reference to geological phenomena, and in particular volcanism and related volcanic hazards. The educational programmes are performed through variable activities, mostly devoted to the school system. At the Osservatorio historical building school groups are daily welcome to enjoy a guided visit to the permanent exhibition able to give visitor a comprehensive view of scientific research evolution, the volcanic phenomena, their related hazards and the emergency plans for the Neapolitan volcanoes, winding through posters, short texts and videos. The same opportunity is given to general public during the week end. Each year more than 12.000 visitors are recorded, coming also from foreign countries. Formation courses or for school teachers working in the part of the Neapolitan area exposed to the highest volcanic risk have been carried out, sometimes in co-operation with Civil Defence officers, to give to the teachers the cultural background necessary to transfer a risk culture to their students and colleagues, but at the same time to develop a new multi-disciplinary approach to volcanic issues. Seminars aimed at illustrating the history and present state of the Neapolitan volcanoes are held in schools, universities and other public and private institution. Very often meetings are held in non-conventional place and context, using informal approach, to bring science out of the laboratories and universities, more close to everyday life. In the last years the Osservatorio Vesuviano has had and promoted their role of scientific reference, also in projects proposed by schools themselves, as in the European project Comenius 2004/2006 that has put in practice a multinational and interdisciplinary education approach, involving four high schools from different countries in activities related to the major natural risks. Each school partner has a scientific institution as reference and supporter. The Italian high school partner, have dealt with the volcanic hazard and risk that characterize the area surrounding the city of Naples, having Osservatorio Vesuviano as its scientific referee. The Neapolitan experiences point out that science community are more and more called to be

involved in first persons in outreach activities. To improve and to better orientate the educational effort, we have to learn to deal with different communication languages and contexts more appropriate for different public, considering science communication as a tool in risk mitigation strategies, but also as a tool to promote science study, and science as possible students choice for their future carriers.

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